some of them. Even now, however, the division preserves a degree of rough approximation to the facts which renders it a usefuj framework for classification.

CHINA PROPER

•^China proper is made up chiefly of the valleys of two great rivers, the Yellow and the Yangtze, and one smaller one, the Hsi Kiang, which, taking their rise in the vast table-lands and mountain fastnesses to the west, flow eastward into an arm of the Pacific; In fertile plains along the middle and lower course of the YelloW River is the traditional seat of primitive Chinese culture, and in comparatively early times the Chinese state incorporated the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze basin. Later, in the centuries just before and just after the Christian era, the Chinese occupied the basins of both rivers and of their tributaries up to the mountains and plateaus of the West and annexed the coastal regions to the south, where numerous smaller valleys, notably that of the Hsi Kiang ("West River") and its confluents, afforded inviting homes. Migration, settlement, and more or less complete amalgamation with earlier stocks followed occupation and annexation, although in some sections very tardily* The area of China proper is approximately a million and a half square miles [2] —about half the size of the United States without Alaska and two-fifths that of Europe.

A more detailed description of this region will disclose the features which have made it a natural unit and the seat of a numerous and civilized people, and which have helped to give to the Chinese some of their outstanding characteristics.

VPolitically the Chinese to-day divide their country into twenty-eight provinces. These do not include Outer

Mongolia and Tibet, which, although technically still under Chinese suzerainty, for most practical purposes have been lost to the Republic. China proper includes, roughly, eighteen of the twenty-eight/ Not all of the political boundaries of the provinces correspond to the natural contour of the land and an intelligible picture can better be obtained by treating the country according to its topography than by its administrative units.

[2] We do not have exact measurements and the total is probably above rather than below this figure.